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MCCAIN SAYS GOP HEALTH-CARE BILL LIKELY DEAD

1 A senior U.S. Republican senator predicted on Sunday that the Republican bill to roll back Obamacare would likely fail, adding to growing signs that the bill is in trouble. "My view is that it's probably going to be dead," Sen. John McCain, a senior U.S. Republican, said on the CBS program, "Face the Nation." The Senate bill, which faces unified Democratic opposition, has been further

imperiled during a week-long recess where several Republican senators have had to return to their states and face constituents strongly opposed to the bill. Senators return to Washington on Monday. The Senate bill keeps much of Obamacare intact but strips away most of its funding.

IRAQI ARMED FORCES VICTORIOUS IN MOSUL

2 Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi arrived in Mosul and congratulated the armed forces for their "victory" over Islamic State after nearly nine months of urban warfare, bringing an end to jihadist rule in the city. Islamic State's defeat in Mosul three years after taking the city is a major blow for the group, which is also losing ground in its operational base in the Syrian city of Raqqa from where it has planned global attacks. The group, however, still controls territory in Iraq and is expected to revert to more conventional insurgent tactics such as bombings as its self-proclaimed caliphate falls apart. The battle for Mosul — by far the largest city to fall under the militants' control — has left large areas in ruins, killed thousands of civilians and displaced nearly one million people. *See page 12 for a photo gallery.*

LA FIRE LEAVES 140K WITHOUT POWER

3 A fire at a receiving station in Los Angeles left 140,000 residents without power on Saturday after a second straight day marked by temperatures that exceeded 90 degrees, power authorities said. Crews were on site assisting fire department operations and assessing damage at the scene of the fire at Receiving Station J, in the North San Fernando Valley, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power said in a statement. Some 140,000 residential and commercial customers were left without power which was cut off at the station to allow crews to work on putting the fire out, the department said. Thee was no word on when power might be restored, which would occur once the fire is out and the system is stabilized, said LADWP, which provides power to 1.6 million customers in the city of Los Angeles.

BULL PLUNGE

4 A fighting cow jumps into the water during the traditional running of bulls "Bous a la mar" (Bulls in the sea) on Denia's harbour near Alicante, Spain, on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

CEASEFIRE DEAL HOLDING IN SOUTHWEST SYRIA

5 A U.S.-Russian brokered ceasefire for southwest Syria was holding more than nine hours after it took effect, a monitor and rebels said, in the latest international attempt at peace-making in the six-year war. The United States, Russia and Jordan reached the ceasefire and "de-escalation agreement" this week with the aim of paving the way for a broader, more robust truce. The announcement came after a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G-20 summit of major economies in Germany. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitoring group, said "calm was prevailing" with no air strikes or clashes in the southwest since the truce began at noon on Sunday. "The situation is relatively calm," said Suhaib al-Ruhail, a spokesman for the Alwiyat al-Furqan rebel faction in the Quneitra area.

WELCOME TO METRO.US!

ELLIS HENICAN, OPINION COLUMNIST

Why stop with Vladimir Putin's election hack? Aren't there any other messes Donald Trump can "move forward" from? You bet there are. He can "move forward" from the nukes in North Korea, "move forward" from the complexities of healthcare and, while he's at it, "move forward" from the decline in America's longstanding role as leader of the world. **metro.us**

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Riders wait at a SEPTA track in Suburban Station. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Fixing Philly: Getting SEPTA updates live

SEPTA is working on getting customers real-time, live updates for where all of their trains are along the route.

HAYDEN MITMAN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

For years, riders have complained that Philly's mass-transit system wasn't as up-to-date on technology as that of other metropolitan areas.

But, with a new push towards adding real-time data to the SEPTA app — and allowing newly collected data to be open source for other developers to utilize — the mass transit system might finally become the envy of other cities.

SEPTA has goals of adding hundreds of new hybrid buses and electric locomotives into its system, GM Jeffrey Knueppel said in an interview with Al Dia.

But, according to Andrew Busch, SEPTA's chief press officer, the first phase of improvements that riders will see is an updated real-time information system that will be implemented in all of SEPTA's busses, regional rail trains and trolleys later this year.

"That's the first part of what the public is going to see on this," said Busch on the coming upgrades. "We are getting much closer to real-time data."

Through a number of projects that will cost SEPTA about $11 million, SEPTA is bringing more accurate location data to all of its services.

"If you're out there waiting for a bus or if you're experiencing delays while you're waiting for a Regional Rail train. … This gives you much better ability to plan your route," said Busch.

The mass transit company has already spent more than $5 million so far, Busch said, to outfit SEPTA's more than 1,400 busses, 380 regional rail trains and trolleys with new modems that use a cellular system — similar to a cellphone — to relay up-to-date location info that will be available to riders online and through the SEPTA app in its TrainView and TransitView features.

According to Busch, these modems will update about every 30 seconds to provide location data. Currently, because of older equipment, he said that it takes several minutes for location data to be updated on the app.

"It's a big step and we certainly know this is what riders expect," said Busch.

Unfortunately, Busch said, the rest of the project to bring real-time data to the Market Street Line and Broad Street Line trains will not be done until sometime next year. He said that, because these trains run through underground tunnels, data collection from the modems that are being installed elsewhere wouldn't be reliable.

Instead, they are working on a system that will put countdown clocks in stations along the subway lines to give riders a better idea of wait times for their next train.

"It's going to take us longer to get to that," he said.

Also, Busch noted that data generated by these newly installed modems in regional rail trains, buses and trolleys will be open source and available to developers to use in their applications.

"Open data is something we've done in the past, and this new data should see a lot of activity," said Busch. "It should be very popular. … We have a good relationship with the tech community."

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A new study outlines the sense of competition that bicyclists and drivers feel when on the road. GETTY IMAGES

UNLOCKING THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND THE DRIVER/CYCLIST CLASH

RANDY LOBASSO

Not too long ago, I was riding my bicycle near the corner of 9th and Carpenter behind a motor vehicle, which was behind another motor vehicle, which was behind a bus. No one was moving very fast, as is often the case on South Philadelphia's narrow streets.

But that didn't matter to the middle-aged man in the pickup truck behind me. Flustered and in a red-faced rage, he incorrectly told me I was legally required to get out of his way.

Ignoring him at first, I turned my head only when he threatened to violently run me over with his vehicle. I pointed to the car in front of me, and the one in front of that car. "No one's going anywhere fast," I said with a shrug.

But that only made him angrier. "I don't care," he yelled out the driver's side window. "I'll run you down!"

Sound familiar? If you're a person who rides a bike, it probably does. A recent study from Portland State University which surveyed 676 "frequent drivers around the country" found decisions on the road aren't always made logically. And the study may provide insight into why it's so important to separate motor vehicle from bicycle traffic as we build street infrastructure for the future.

According to the study's findings, given there is only so much space on our streets, and only so much transportation funding to go around, a sense of competition often occurs. "When you put people in those circumstances, they act like a member of their group and not an individual," the study's author, Tara Goddard, Ph.D., told Streetsblog.

Drivers, the study found, often don't want to hold up their own group — and actually feel intense pressure to not slow the traffic behind them. Not only does that create a situation in which there is less empathy for the most vulnerable road user in the street, but drivers may try riskier maneuvers when passing cyclists.

"We know that when people are under stress, they make more errors in their motor skills," Goddard told Streetsblog. "Drivers, whether they mean to or not, are behaving unsafely or badly around cyclists."

Such situations occur because people on bicycles and motor vehicle users are expected to share city streets. And while people on bicycles make mistakes, too, their mistakes don't have the same potential to hurt other road users like that of a guy in a pickup truck who thinks he'd get to his endpoint two minutes faster if the bicyclist were out of the way.

And as I've been writing in this column for the past year, and the most recent study at Portland State seems to conclude, the answer — as much as it pains some to admit — is going to be separated roadways for cyclists and motor vehicles.

"While attitudes may be difficult or take time to shift, roadway design can work immediately by either fully separating modes, or slowing down interactions so that drivers can rely more on executive function and less on implicit cognitions when looking for, seeing and behaving toward bicyclists," notes Goddard's report. "Infrastructure that designates portions of the roadway space to certain users may help alleviate the tensions and difficulties that drivers in this study felt when maneuvering around bicyclists."

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Philly women redefine 'foster child'

Women who survived and thrived after leaving the foster care system shared their experiences at a recent talk.

CASSIE HEPLER
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Imagine being a child with no place to call home, no family and no stability.

A small group of former foster children, now thriving adults and successful women, bravely sat united to share their tales with a room full of social workers and other former foster kids at a recent talk at University of Penn Law School to debut videographer Yasmin Mistry's "Foster Care Film." The documentary delves into the emotional psyche of the former foster women in short video stories.

"Some homes were OK, but many were not," said Charell Star, the New York-based owner of lifestyle website Not Just a Girl in a Dress and a foster care advocate, who went into foster care because her mom had drug problems, and her dad was in and out of prison. "I did experience abuse but was always able to maintain the hope that I would get to go live with my great-grandmother when she got better. That hope — coupled with the fact that I always loved school — helped me not internalize everything."

Mirroring the helping hand she got from "some amazing teachers," Star received an academic scholarship to go to boarding school in Arizona, and she went to college at Boston University and the rest is foster history.

"My dad was addicted to heroin and sold drugs, and my mother suffers from mental health issues," said Marissa Meyers, now a development manager for the nonprofit Public Health Management Corporation. "I was in the child welfare system from the time I was a toddler up until I was 16. I never had a real foster family and was shuffled around to group homes and residential programs."

A group of former foster children shared their stories in conjunction with a documentary screening. CASSIE HEPLER

It is common for youth who have experienced trauma to disassociate from their past as a survival technique, Meyers said.

"I spent the first half of my life learning how to numb the pain, and I am now trying to teach myself how to feel," she said.

A common thread is a family history of drug, mental and behavioral problems.

"I entered foster care at 11 — a tough age for one that has experienced trauma and separation," said Constance Krebs Iannetta, now board of directors for Foster Care Alumni of America. "I spent the next few years in group homes and with foster families. Though my placements were generally good, I was always challenging the rules set forth by the agency – 9 p.m. prom curfew, not allowed to get a drivers permit/license, background checks needed for overnight stays at a friend's house. I wanted to be a 'normal' kid."

She now lives in stark contrast to the chaos she grew up with and is happily married to the love of her life with two foster children of their own.

"As a third-generation foster kid, the odds were not in my favor — yet here I am, breaking the cycle and foster strong," she said.

Now she is dedicated to helping other foster kids find their footing in life.

"My drive to help children has been instrumental to my resilience and overcoming the pain of my past. It has been my dream to help abused and neglected children since I was 12 years old and that continues to be my dream at 27," Meyers said. "Even on my darkest days, I remember my purpose in life is to change not just 'the system,' but our system."

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TRUMP'S AMERICA

THE TWITTER EQUIVALENT OF A SHRUG

President Donald Trump attends a panel discussion titled "Launch Event of the Women's Entrepreneur Finance Initiative" on the second day of the G-20 summit on Saturday in Hamburg, Germany. GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

ELLIS HENICAN
@henican

Why stop with Vladimir Putin's election hack? Aren't there any other messes Donald Trump can "move forward" from?

You bet there are. He can "move forward" from the nukes in North Korea, "move forward" from the complexities of healthcare and, while he's at it, "move forward" from the decline in America's longstanding role as leader of the world.

Amid all the headshaking in Hamburg, some of the newly emboldened Euros really were calling the G-20 summit "the G-19."

There's only one problem with all this "moving forward." It doesn't actually solve anything. "Moving forward," the Trump version, is really just another way of saying, "Aw, forget about it."

"I strongly pressed President Putin twice about Russian meddling in our election," the president typed on Sunday in the Twitter equivalent of a shrug. "He vehemently denied it. I've already given my opinion."

So there.

"Now it is time to move forward in working constructively with Russia!"

Instead of finding out exactly how Putin's people worked to steal last year's U.S. election, instead of discovering exactly how deeply the Trump campaign was involved, Trump now wants to set up a U.S.-Russian "cybersecurity unit" so the two powers can work together. Back home in America, that went over about as well as you might expect on both sides of the aisle.

"It's not the dumbest idea I've ever heard, but it's pretty close," said Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham. "This is like the guy who robbed your house proposing a working group on burglary," former Obama Defense Secretary Ash Carter said on CNN. "It is they who did this."

Oh, that.

Speaking of CNN, Donald Trump Jr. has now joined his father's juvenile attacks on the "fake news" media. Exactly a week after Senior tweeted out a clip of him clotheslining a CNN-headed Vince McMahon, Junior spread a doctored video of Tom Cruise's "Top Gun." Only this time, the third-grader-in-chief is Maverick and the Soviet "bogey" is plastered with the CNN logo.

Let's all try to ignore the irony of replacing America's real enemy with a media brand. Maybe we can just "move forward" from these childish video pranks.

What's next? Booger jokes?

Metro columnist Ellis Henican is a veteran journalist, best-selling author and frequent commentator on CNN and other TV networks. Follow him on Twitter @henican.

DO YOU AGREE?

Tell us what you think!

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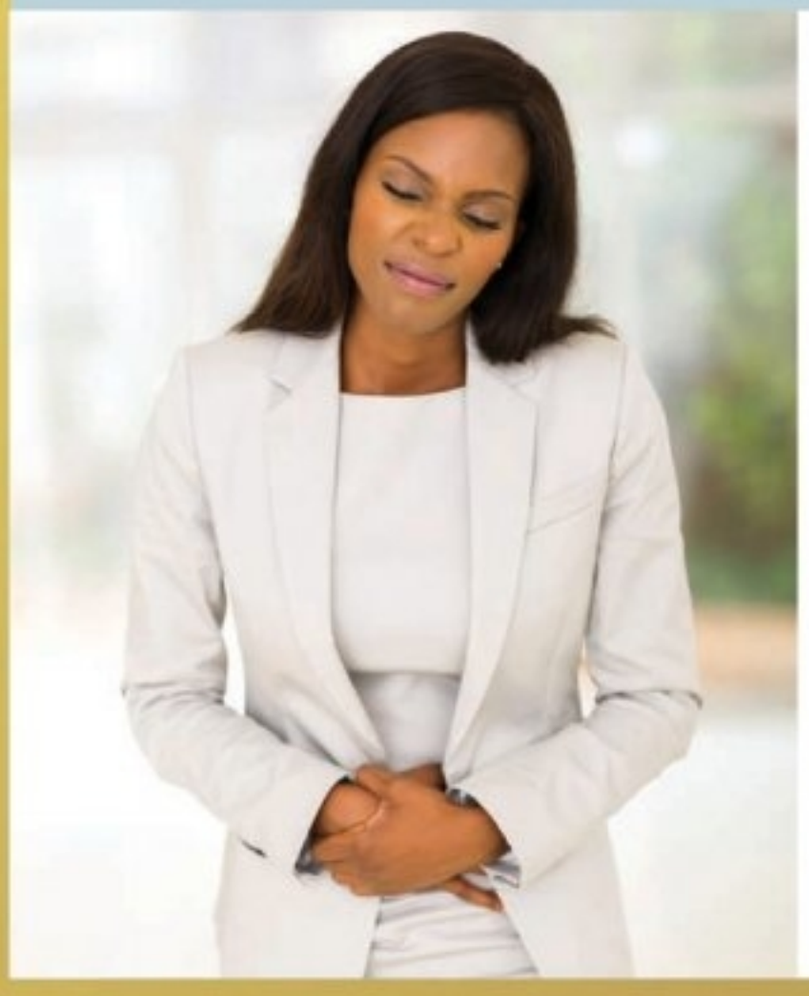
Are you suffering from Heavy Menstrual Bleeding due to

Uterine Fibroids?



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Iraqi's celebrate the 'liberation' of Mosul

Children holding Iraq's national flag react as Iraqi forces celebrate in the Old City of Mosul on Sunday. ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Iraq's national flag is suspended to a drone of Iraq's federal police as forces celebrate in the Old City of Mosul.

Iraq's federal police members wave Iraq's national flag as they celebrate in the Old City of Mosul.

Iraq's federal police members wave Iraq's national flag.

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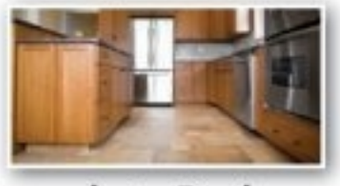

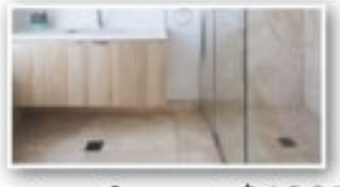

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VIRGINIA

Klan members rally against removal of General Lee statue

A few dozen Ku Klux Klan members and supporters shouted "white power" at a rally on Saturday in Charlottesville, Virginia where they protested against a city council decision to remove a statute honoring Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

The group was guarded by scores of police and outnumbered by hundreds of counter-protesters who waved signs denouncing racism. Anti-KKK protesters raised their voices in chants and shouts, drowning out speeches from the white supremacists, live video feeds on social media showed.

There were no initial reports of violence at the rally that lasted less than an hour. The Klan group that brandished Confederate flags and signs with anti-Semitic messages was separated from crowds by a ring of fencing and a heavy police presence.

Later police fired tear gas canisters when some protesters refused orders to disperse. Twenty-three people were arrested, but officials could not confirm their affiliations.

In February, the Charlottesville City Council voted 3-2 to remove the statue from the park once named for Lee and make plans for a new memorial to remember the southern city's enslaved population, The Daily Progress, the local newspaper reported.

At least one person who participated in the Klan rally against the statute removal could be seen with a holstered pistol.

Confederacy statues and flags have been removed from public spaces across the United States since 2015, after a white supremacist murdered nine black parishioners at a South Carolina church.

Critics of the monuments say they foster racism by celebrating leaders of the Confederacy in the pro-slavery South during the U.S. Civil War. REUTERS

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OBAMACARE LIVES ON

TOM FOREMAN

Opinion

CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the book "My Year of Running Dangerously."

Obamacare was doomed. On its deathbed. Dig the hole. That was the feeling far and wide soon after the election of Donald Trump. Congressional Republicans held both houses of Congress and had been pounding the drum to take it down for years. As a candidate, Trump enthusiastically took up the beat, telling a joint session of Congress together they'd get the job done. "Repeal and replace" were the watchwords.

But here we are almost halfway through his first year, and Obamacare is still around. It's having troubles to be sure: insurance companies bailing out, premiums running hot and serious questions about the program's long-term viability without significant tweaks. But again, it's still here much to the apparent puzzlement of Republican senators who are gathering around Obamacare like it's a giant Rubik's Cube.

So why are they having so much trouble? They are caught between their idealistic desire to strip away the signature accomplishment of the Obama years and the practical reality of what that means — the number of uninsured Americans going back up, some Obamacare ideas which the public likes being scrapped, and all with no promise that insurance premiums for the rest of us will get any lower.

Put simply, they are colliding with a basic truth of governance. It is easy to give things to people but hard to take them away. The result has been a staggering array of alternative plans. The president has proposed repealing Obamacare now and replacing it at some vague time in the future. Other Republicans have rolled out complicated schemes to sidestep the thorniest parts of their internal debate. And if none of that can gather enough Republican support to pass a bill, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has even proposed the ultimate heresy in the eyes of some conservatives — working with the Democrats to prop up Obamacare.

Whether they can sort it out remains a mystery. But for now, the biggest thing Obamacare has going for it is a deeply divided Republican party unable to act decisively. And for Democrats, that has extended the long holiday week … only it's not so much like Independence Day, as Christmas in July.

A protester holds a sign at a town hall meeting. GETTY IMAGES

NY Times: Trump's son met Russian lawyer after promise of information on Clinton

Allegations of the Trump campaign's ties to Russia have cast a shadow over Donald Trump's first five months in office, distracting from attempts by his fellow Republicans in Congress to overhaul the U.S. healthcare and tax systems.

President Donald Trump's son Donald Trump Jr. agreed to meet with a Kremlin-linked lawyer during the 2016 campaign after being promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton, The New York Times reported on Sunday, citing three advisers to the White House.

Trump's then-campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, also attended the meeting, the Times reported.

The Times quoted a statement from Donald Trump Jr. in which he acknowledged meeting with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya.

"After pleasantries were exchanged, the woman stated that she had information that individuals connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Ms. Clinton," the Times quoted Donald Trump Jr. as saying. Clinton was the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee.

"Her statements were vague, ambiguous and made no sense. No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information."

Allegations of the Trump campaign's ties to Russia have cast a shadow over Donald Trump's first five months in office, distracting from attempts by his fellow Republicans in Congress to overhaul the U.S. healthcare and tax systems.

The Kremlin has denied U.S. intelligence agencies' conclusion that Moscow tried to tilt the election in Trump's favor, using such means as hacking into the emails of senior Democrats. Trump has repeatedly denied any collusion. REUTERS

Donald Trump, Jr.
GETTY IMAGES

BRIEFS

Gunmen kill one, wound eight at Ohio maternity party

Two gunmen killed a woman at an Ohio maternity party and wounded eight others, including children and a pregnant woman who lost her fetus in the melee, local media reported on Sunday.

The gunmen, who have not been identified, burst into the house in Colerain Township, outside Cincinnati, on Saturday evening, not long after the pregnant woman revealed she would soon give birth to a boy, according to the Cincinnati Inquirer.

The woman was shot in the thigh and was receiving treatment for her injuries, the paper said, citing local police.

Another woman at the party was killed, the newspaper reported, and eight people were injured, one of them seriously, the newspaper said. The victims were not identified.

Witnesses told police they saw the two gunmen run out before driving away in a car.

The Colerain Police Department did not immediately respond to queries. REUTERS

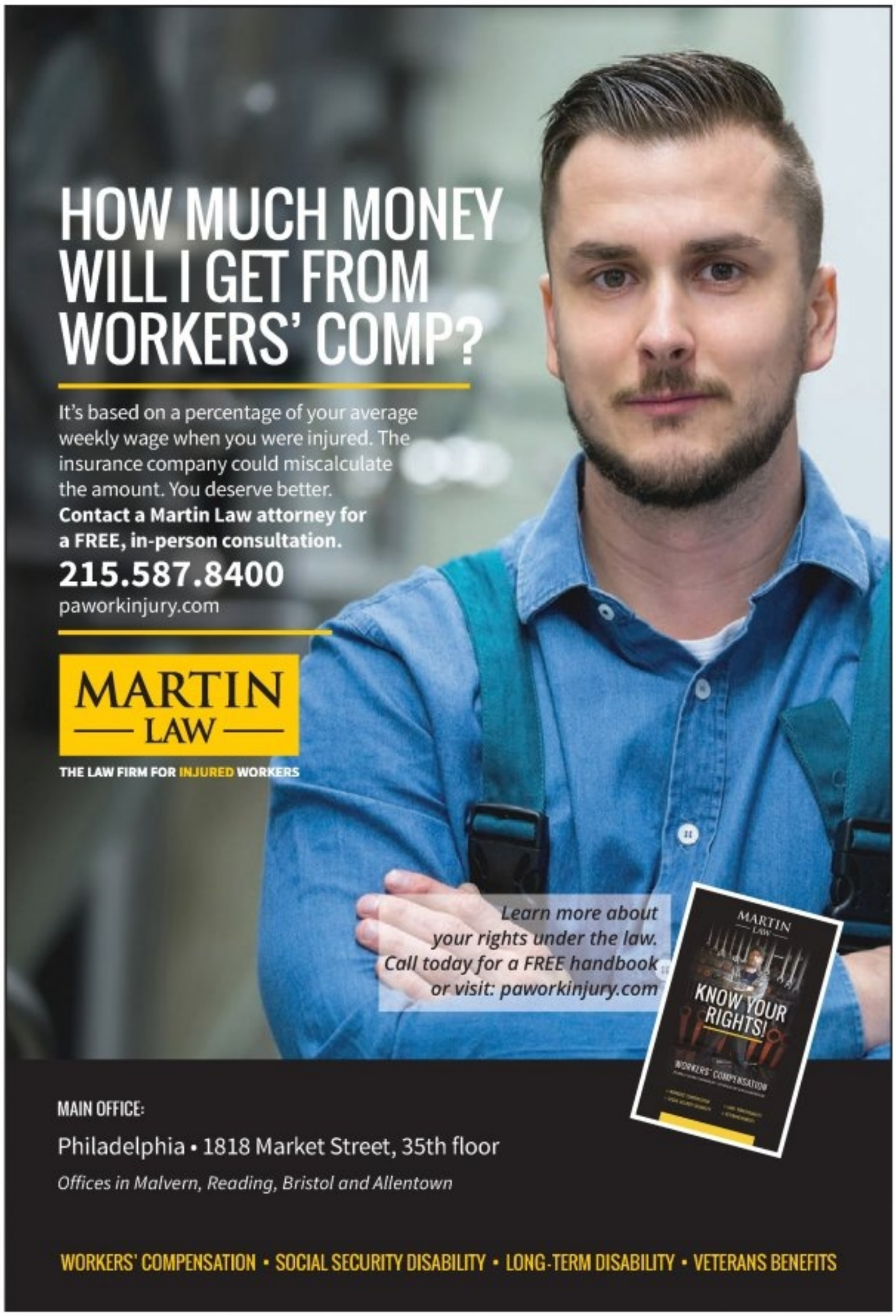
Mnuchin: Plan for US tax increase on rich not being considered

The Trump administration is not considering a plan to raise taxes on the wealthiest Americans in order to pay for tax breaks for the middle class, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said on Sunday.

Speaking on ABC's "This Week," Mnuchin said the administration plans to release its tax plan in early September and is aiming for a vote on Congress on it by the end of this year.

The news website Axios reported that Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon was advocating a proposal to raise the highest tax bracket to 40 percent or above in order to pay for tax cuts on middle-class Americans.

REUTERS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Republicans deride Trump's idea for cybersecurity unit with Russia

Three Republican senators — Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, John McCain of Arizona and Mario Rubio of Florida — blasted the idea.

President Donald Trump said on Sunday he and Russia's president had discussed forming a cyber security unit, an idea harshly criticized by Republicans who said Moscow could not be trusted after its alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. election.

Tweeting after his first meeting with President Vladimir Putin on Friday, Trump said now was the time to work constructively with Moscow, pointing to a cease-fire deal in southwest Syria that came into effect on Sunday.

"Putin & I discussed forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded and safe," he said following their talks at a summit of the Group of 20 nations in Hamburg, Germany.

"There has been no penalty," McCain, who chairs the Senate armed services committee, told CBS' "Face the Nation" program according to a CBS transcript. "Vladimir Putin ... got away with literally trying to change the outcome ... of our election."

"Yes, it's time to move forward. But there has to be a price to pay," he added.

Rubio, on Twitter, said: "Partnering with Putin on a 'Cyber Security Unit' is akin to partnering with [Syrian President Bashar al] Assad on a 'Chemical Weapons Unit.'"

GETTY IMAGES

Trump argued for rapprochement with Moscow in his campaign but has been unable to deliver because his administration has been dogged by investigations into the allegations of Russian interference in the election and ties with his campaign.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is investigating the matter, including whether there may have been any collusion on the part of Trump campaign officials, as are congressional committees including both the House and Senate intelligence panels.

Those probes are focused almost exclusively on Moscow's actions, lawmakers and intelligence officials say, and no evidence has surfaced publicly implicating other countries despite Trump's suggestion that others could have been involved.

Moscow has denied any interference, and Trump says his campaign did not collude with Russia.

Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, told CNN's "State of the Union" program Russia could not be a credible partner in a cyber security unit.

"If that's our best election defense, we might as well just mail our ballot boxes to Moscow," Schiff added.

Separately, U.S. government officials said that a recent hack into business systems of U.S. nuclear power and other energy companies was carried out by Russian government hackers, the Washington Post reported on Saturday.

Trump said he "strongly pressed President Putin twice about Russian meddling in our election. He vehemently denied it."

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Box Office: 'Spider-Man: Homecoming' slings to massive $117M domestic opening

Spider-Man is officially a box office overachiever.

As of Sunday morning, the latest cinematic depiction of the webbed-hero, "Spider-Man: Homecoming," is looking at a $117 million opening from 4,348 locations. $10.6 million of the domestic total came from 392 Imax screens. That's a huge win for Sony, Columbia Pictures, and Marvel Studios for the film, which cost roughly $175 million to produce. The anticipated opening weekend is higher than industry estimates, which were in the $90 million to $110 million range, while the studio cautiously pegged it at $80 million.

"Everyone at Sony and Marvel are thrilled," said Josh Greenstein, Sony's marketing chief. "It's safe to say it's a triumphant return for Spider-Man."

"Homecoming" banked on the idea that the summer box office was craving a family-friendly superhero movie — Tom Holland plays a high school version of Peter Parker who, at 15 years old, has to prove that he is worthy of being called an Avenger. And it seems that bet is paying off. The $117 million figure is the second largest in Sony Pictures history, behind "Spider-Man 3."

Much attention has been paid to the flick's successful marketing campaign, which heavily featured Iron Man (Robert Downy Jr.), who serves as Spider-Man's mentor in the film. Michael Keaton plays the big bad, Vulture, Jon Favreau plays Spidey's guardian, Happy Hogan, and Zendaya stars as Michelle Jones ("MJ"), Parker's brainy classmate. The movie consistently dominated social media in the weeks leading up to its release.

Tom Holland attends a press conference. GETTY IMAGES

Before "Homecoming," Jon Watts directed two much lower-budget feature films — the 2014 horror movie "Clown" and 2015's "Cop Car" starring Kevin Bacon. He also has a handful of writing and producing credits, and is one of six writers credited on the "Homecoming" script.

Kevin Feige and Amy Pascal share production credit. While the former has proven essentially infallible in the biz, "Homecoming" serves as a redemption narrative for the latter. After the infamous 2014 Sony hack, Pascal was ousted from her post at the top of the studio, and began to focus on producing. This is her second major release following last summer's "Ghostbusters" reboot, but she also has a hand in a long list of upcoming projects including Sony's "Barbie" movie, Steven Spielberg's A-list-studded "The Papers," and future "Spider-Man" movies.

"We have incredible partners," said Greenstein, who said that those relationships helped the film to be "embraced in a big way. It really shows the strength for this beloved character."

Despite the reliability of superhero movies at the box office, "Homecoming" could have been seen as a big bet for all parties involved. For one, it's the third iteration of the character in the past 15 years — before Holland, Andrew Garfield and Tobey Maguire donned the Spidey suit. The makers had to trust that audiences would be ready to see the character yet again. On top of that, the summer box office has not been particularly kind to the sequels and reboots that have become the industry's summer signature. As audience fatigue has impacted previously reliable franchises like "Transformers" and even "Despicable Me," the one thing that this summer has proved is that the domestic audience is not yet burnt out on superheroes.

This is yet another Marvel movie release that has managed to capture the approval of critics and audience members — something the DC Extended Universe could not claim until this summer with "Wonder Woman." But Marvel's been there since the beginning. "Homecoming" currently has a 93% on Rotten Tomatoes and an A CinemaScore. REUTERS

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COMMUTER'S CHOICE

Forget winter — war is here

Nobody is safe, even Jon Snow. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF HBO

In preparation for the most epic "Game of Thrones" season yet, Metro investigates what could be coming (besides winter).

DANIEL CASILLAS
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The past few seasons of "Game of Thrones" focused on the struggle for the Iron Throne. By the end of the sixth season, Jon Snow was proclaimed King in the North; Daenerys Targaryen burned Khal Moro and his supporters alive, taking command of the Dothraki; and Cersei Lannister set the Sept of Baelor aflame, eliminating all her rivals — from Margaery Tyrell to the High Sparrow.

This year, the fight intensifies. The coming season, with only seven episodes, is expected to be even more cruel and bloody than the ones before it. And a

video recently revealed by HBO Spain confirms as much, with a sneak peek of a battle between Daenerys' army and Cersei's for Casterly Rock.

The footage also featured glimpses of a new maester in the Citadel library (Jim Broadbent, perhaps?), a zombified Mountain unsheathing his sword, Brienne of Tarth training up Podrick and Daenerys exploring a cave that appears to be underneath Dragonstone.

So what else can we look forward to this season? Here are some guesses.

Episodes could put Jon Snow's life in major danger — again.

After being revived last season, Jon renounced his oath to the Night's Watch, gathered forces

4 Fan Favorite Theories for Season 7

Tyrion Lannister

1. Tyrion is a Targaryen

A very popular theory among "Game of Thrones" fans suggests that Tyrion is not a Lannister, but a Targaryen. According to the premise, Tyrion is the product of a nonconsensual relationship between Mad King Aerys and Tywin's wife Joanna.

The series itself has given some evidence to support the theory. Tywin told Tyrion, on two occasions, that he was not his son. And Daenerys' dragons didn't attack Tyrion when he interacted with them for the first time in season six. Coincidence? We think not.

Samwell Tarley

2. "GoT" is a story being told by Sam

John Bradley, who plays Samwell Tarley, has suggested as much. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, he notes that the gyroscopes from the "Game of Thrones" intro being in the Library of Masters is no coincidence. "It could mean any number of things," he says. "If you take the logic of the story now, the story of Westeros and the story of the battle for the Iron Throne, it would be a book in that library."

3. Jaime will kill Cersei

When Cersei was young, she encountered a soothsayer, Maggy the Frog. She told the young Cersei that she would have three children, that those children would all die prematurely, and that she would be queen only until a "younger, more beautiful" one takes her place. So far, all of those predictions, save the last, have come true.

In "A Feast for Crows," Maggy has one last prophecy: "And when your tears have drowned you, the valonqar shall wrap his hands about your pale white throat and choke the life from you." Valonqar is High Valyrian for "little brother," and Jaime is mere minutes younger than his twin sister. And? He's got plenty to be mad about, what with her destroying the Sept of Baelor.

Jaime and Cersei Lannister

4. "The prince who was promised"

In the mythology of the series, there's a prophecy about a hero named Azor Ahai. The legend says Azor will be reborn as "the prince who was promised," one last great hero who vanquishes the darkness with his flaming sword, Lightbringer. The prophecy also says that he'll be reborn one day "amidst salt and smoke." Melisandre believed, at first, that Stannis Baratheon was that prince. But now that he's gone, it's pretty clear that either Jon or Dany fit the bill — Jon being born of salt (his mother's tears) and smoke (the battle at the Tower of Joy); and Dany being unburnt.

Beware the Night King, who's leading the White Walkers to the Wall — and beyond.

in the North with his half-sister Sansa Stark, and defeated Ramsay Bolton's army. He's made enemies along the way, and Kit Harington, who plays Jon, recognizes that things could be bad for his character this year — even if he is a fan favorite. "I felt safe in season six because I thought it would be bad storytelling to kill me in the [same] season I'd been resurrected," he told SFX Magazine. "But as for seasons beyond six, it's back to business. [Jon's] in mortal danger like anyone else."

Expect the villains to be even more sadistic. If you thought that the worst villains are already dead — like the aforementioned Ramsay, a sadistic sociopath eaten alive by his own dogs — think again. Danish actor Pilou Asbækm, who plays Euron Greyjoy, claims that villains like Ramsay and Joffrey Baratheon will pale in comparison to the terror and mayhem his character will create this season.

"After this season, Ramsay's gonna look like a little kid," Asbækm told Empire Magazine. With his niece and nephew, Yara and Theon Greyjoy, having fled the Iron Islands and his wrath, let's hope so.

Will the Wall fall? Last season, Bran was marked by the Night King, allowing the White Walker army to cross the Three-Eyed Raven's magical barrier and enter his lair. If Bran were to pass through the Wall and return to Winterfell, would it lift the magic that keeps the White Walkers out too?

It's likely. Many fans think this season will feature a huge crack in The Wall, which, of course, would have major consequences, and bring up big questions. But thankfully, we probably won't have to wait long to see what really happens. With fewer episodes, the coming season will likely have a faster pace. And your questions? They'll be answered a whole lot sooner.

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Meet Shakespeare, the rock star

TNT's new series "Will" follows a young Bard as he rises to fame in Elizabethan London with a punk rock flair.

EVA KIS
@thisiskis
eva.kis@metro.us

Fresh out of acting school in London, Laurie Davidson stars in TNT's "Will," premiering tonight at 9 p.m. TNT

It's about time William Shakespeare got an origin story as exciting, sexy and violent as his plays.

TNT's drama "Will," premiering July 10, ditches powdered wigs and formality to turn 16th-century London into the seductive and dangerous world that it was, where people lived fast and died young.

At the center of it was Shakespeare, played by British newcomer Laurie Davidson, who doesn't take long to go from wide-eyed boy from the countryside to getting tangled up in the Protestant Reformation, adultery and trying to feed Londoners' passion for theater. In short, "Will" is giving Shakespeare back to the people.

"The amazing thing about Shakespeare is he was writing plays where people from all walks of life were attending," says Davidson, who was recruited out of his final year of acting school in London to play the young Bard. "So Shakespeare had to write plays that connected with a huge variety of people and be really clever about it."

In the 16th century, playwrights were the rock stars, and "Will" takes that literally with a heavy dose of spikes, leather and colored hair straight out of the '70s punk rock era. The gritty aesthetic is thanks to writer and producer Craig Pearce, a longtime Baz Luhrmann collaborator whose resume includes "Romeo + Juliet" and "Great Gatsby."

GETTY IMAGES

It's not long before Shakespeare becomes the David Bowie of his era — with a few lessons from Eminem. The influence of "Hamilton" in the fusion of music and history is clear, with Shakespeare getting into what is the 16th-century version of a rap battle in the first episode.

To make the scene flow, Davidson watched "Straight Outta Compton" and "8 Mile" on the advice of director Shekhar Kapur. "Whilst I didn't go full-on gangsta rap," he says, "it just gave an idea of the way that people use words as weapons."

Since little is known about Shakespeare's life, "Will" has a lot of creative freedom and uses it to get to the story behind the famous plays. "What Pearce did an amazing job of is trying to get inside the mind of why he wrote these plays."

Of course, Shakespeare's most famous contemporary Christopher Marlowe (Jamie Campbell Bower) also features in the show, which winks at their checkered past before setting the two up as frenemies.

"They basically see the good things in each other's lives, and they want what the other person has," Davidson explains.

Love, religious conflict, punk music and dramatic tension — sounds like a Shakespeare-worthy production.

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The *best* new movies on Netflix this month

Escape the heat by streaming everything from "Rogue One" to "E.T." to "Punch-Drunk Love." **MATT PRIGGE**

"Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" *(July 18)*

Confess your unpopular opinion: We're not huge fans of the first "Star Wars" spinoff movie. It's clumsily plotted; the characters are thin. (Though, we should add, they're played by excellent, game actors.) The fan service reaches vomit levels with the digitized Peter Cushing, who died in 1994. But what do we know? It made a billion dollars worldwide, and that's what counts. Some of it is definitely cool, even the wholly crass Darth Vader-kills-rebels bit. We may skip around here and there when it hits Netflix.

"Titanic" *(July 1)*

Speaking of movies that made all the money, James Cameron's Best Picture winner is still hanging out in the second slot of highest grossing movies ever, right behind James Cameron's "Avatar." The world of 1997 embraced "Titanic" the way the Red States embraced Donald Trump, though Cameron's clunky dialogue is far superior to POTUS-speak. We haven't seen this since around 1998, and we'd love to see what it looks like now.

"E.T. — The Extra Terrestrial" *(July 1)*

A month ago, through a soiled hankie, we solemnly reported that "E.T." was leaving Netflix. We should have known better. After a 30-day hiatus, Steven Spielberg's devastating look at alien-boy love is back to streaming. It's like if E.T. himself had left Elliott only to return a handful of weeks later for a sequel. Anyway, are you ready to cry like a baby again?

"Punch-Drunk Love" *(July 1)*

We love it when Adam Sandler saunters away from his Happy Madison films and tries his hand at, like, you know, real filmmakers. This summer we'll be seeing him in a Noah Baumbach film, "The Meyerowitz Stories." But even that will have a tough time beating "Punch-Drunk Love," his nutso Paul Thomas Anderson movie, in which the "Boogie Nights" director fashioned a bizarre whatzit around Sandler. Anderson takes one of the actor's most defining traits — his capacity for comic rage — and makes it scary (though still funny).

"Bad Santa 2" *(July 8)*

Hey, we laughed. The 13-years-later sequel is kind of a piece of crap — dirty, foul, stupid, crass, kind of a repeat of the first. But that's probably what we deserve.

"Lion" *(July 9)*

It was the movie the Weinstein Company rammed down our throats last year — keeping it in theaters for months until enough people saw it, campaigning for it so hardcore that it couldn't help but nab six Oscar nominations. Dev Patel scored one of those, though he doesn't appear till the second half. Before that we get super-cute Sunny Pawar, playing a boy from remotest India who goes missing; years later, after being adopted by an Australian couple (including a very good, very subtle Nicole Kidman), he finally tries to locate his family. All we'll say is we like the first half a lot.

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Summer is here, and while we're all about barbecues and burgers when the weather heats up, pizza is a pretty great option too, especially seasonal pies offered by Philadelphia restaurants. From gluten-free options to pizzas that are downright peachy, here are four summer pies we're dying to try.

Bufala mozzarella and San Marzano tomatoes

Enjoying the sights in Old City? Stop by Capofitto at Second and Chestnut to fuel the rest of your journey with the delicious wood-fired pizza. For the summer, it has a Bufala mozzarella and San Marzano tomato pizza on the menu that also comes with green meadow farm yellow tomatoes, ricotta salata and fresh basil on top. Still hungry? Treat yourself to the

Bufala mozzarella and San Marzano tomatoes at Capofitto PROVIDED

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summer pizza pies

Gluten-free mushroom and goat cheese at SLiCe. PROVIDED

award-winning gelato. *Capofitto, 223 Chestnut St., capofittoforno.com*

Gluten-free mushroom and goat cheese

No need to miss out on pizza just because you're gluten-free! The folks over at SLiCe have rolled out a special gluten-free mushroom-and-goat-cheese pie for the summer months that's also topped with portobellos, baby spinach and red onions. For added security, the pizza crust is cooked in a separate pan to avoid contamination. *SLiCe, 1180 S. 10th St., 1740 Sansom St., 431 E. Girard Ave., SLiCepa.com*

Feta and Tomato

So you're not gluten-free but still want a summer pizza pie at SLiCe? Not to worry, a second seasonal pie has all the gluten you could want! The feta-and-tomato pizza also comes topped with olive oil, garlic, mozzarella, kalamata olives and fresh basil. Mangia! *SLiCe, 1180 S. 10th St., 1740 Sansom St., 431 E. Girard Ave., SLiCepa.com*

Porchetta

Pizzeria Vetri in Rittenhouse is celebrating summer with porchetta pizza, topped with porchetta (roast pork), peaches, arugula, mozzarella and parmesan. Get a table outside with a glass of white wine and pretend like you're in Italy for your lunch break. Pizzeria Vetri Rittenhouse, *1615 Chancellor St., pizzeriavetri.com*

Zucca

Near the Art Museum? Pizzeria Vetri has a location there spotlighting its own summer pizza — the Zucca. It's topped with zucchini, summer squash, parmesan, stracciatella and mint for a refreshingly sweet-and-savory pizza experience. Burn off the calories running up and down the nearby Rocky steps, and you'll be good to go. *Pizzeria Vetri, 1939 Callowhill St., pizzeriavetri.com*

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You're never too old to learn something new.

Science After Hours inspires curiosity at the Franklin Institute

A passion for science with cocktails for the most inquisitive of adults.

KYLE HILLER
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"Science After Hours" is The Franklin Institute's popular monthly evening event series featuring experiments, demonstrations and engaging science curated by The Franklin Institute. In collaboration with organizations all across the city, the series has drawn sold-out crowds this year and continues to grow. Merging quirky science with colorful cocktails has proved to be the perfect formula for inviting adults to become curious kids again. July leads into summer with "The '60s" as its theme.

"There was a lot of science in the '60s," says Director of Museum Programs Gerri Trooskin in an interview. "The first laser was developed. The first kidney and heart transplants happened. There was the first man in space." She continues down the list of significant accomplishments in the sciences from that decade, many of which are not widely known or are often forgotten.

The cultural icons typically associated with the '60s aren't grounded in science, and Trooskin wants to remind people of more than just the decade's tie-dye and music. "We'll be focusing a lot on space, including tours of the lunar lander we have at the Institute."

Trooskin and her team at the Franklin Institute are successfully engaging adults with science. "People who grew up here see the Institute as a place where they can be kids again," Trooskin says.

Since its 2014 debut, Science After Hours has quickly grown into one of the Institute's most popular and highest in-demand events drawing between 700 and 2,200 attendees each month. "They ask questions the way that kids do and they feel comfortable here."

Science After Hours continues with "Don't Try This at Home" on Aug. 22 and wraps up summer with "Wizard School" Sept. 26. Both events return after immense turnouts last year. "It's one of my favorite events of the year because it's so authentically us," Trooskin says of "Don't Try This At Home." "We break out our messiest, biggest, wackiest and most explosive experiments that we do all year and put it into one night."

"Wizard School" also proves to attract the most avid "Harry Potter" fans around, and Trooskin promises that "the enthusiasm is intense."

"Science After Hours" takes place the second Tuesday of each month from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and continues for the rest of the year. Tickets are available at fi.edu. Admission is $15 for the public and $10 for members of The Franklin Institute. All events are 21+.

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'70s comedy 'The Nerd' doles out laughs and life lessons at Bucks County Playhouse

Bringing the style of old-school sitcoms to the stage.

BRANDON BAKER
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"The Nerd" runs through July 15 at Bucks County Playhouse. MARK GAVIN

Think of Larry Shue's "The Nerd" at Bucks County Playhouse as the stage-set sitcom of the late '70s – a product of its time that, all the same, still offers the laughs and sentimental life lessons of our favorite '90s TV comedies.

"Ten years after this play was written, these sorts of plays were sitcoms," Alex Fraser, producing director of the play, says. "When this play was written [in 1979], sitcoms had a very different kind of emphasis — shows like 'The Partridge Family,' or 'The Carol Burnett Show.' These comedies were on when the play was written, and it wasn't for 10 or 15 years that sitcoms like 'Roseanne' or 'The Cosby Show' [came along], when sitcoms became more adult-based."

And so it is with the play's central "nerd," a hard-to-love architect who's taught a lesson by his two best friends — and tenants — when they hire an actor to portray a penpal he's admired his entire life, only for him to be totally obnoxious and deal out epiphanies like poker chips as the story unveils. At the core of that is a different meaning of the word "nerd" than most of us are used to hearing today.

"Now, people can be all kinds of nerds — fashion nerds, computer nerds, and it just means that kind of heightened focus on a specific discipline," Fraser explains. "It doesn't mean you are in some way annoying or troublesome or tiresome, or in some ways cut off from other people, which is the kind of connotation it has in this play.

"Here, the nerd is an irritant, obnoxious and not regarded as an expert in anything other than being annoying." There are seven cast members, including an 8-year-old boy, in the two-act play.

The set, Fraser says, will have a midcentury-modern aesthetic and will be relatively subtle in how it directs the story. The only three-dimensional props will be a tape-deck answering machine — part of his effort to keep it more of a "period piece" — and some furniture. The walls will be designed as blueprints to reflect the main character, Willum Cubbert (played by Kyle Cameron), and his profession as an architect.

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Ultimately, it's a coming-of-age story that puts adolescent-type adults in the spotlight. "If there's a theme to the play, it would probably be that sometimes people need to be interfered with to overcome obstacles or challenges — or sometimes they need a friend to come in and galvanize them, change them," he says. "That's what happens in this play: It's about a bunch of characters, and one of them is stuck in his life, in this apartment, and this other character comes into his life and completely shakes him up. He's a different person in the beginning of the play than the end."

"The Nerd" runs through July 15 at the Bucks County Playhouse.

Many applicants make the mistake of simply rewriting their résumé. ISTOCK

How to write a cover letter that actually gets read

It's all about building a relationship with the person on the other side of the screen.

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For those on the job hunt, nothing can seem more daunting than writing a cover letter. And while it may seem redundant to those who think their résumé shows off all of their skills— even better, in neatly aligned bullet points— a persuasive cover letter is far more likely to get your foot in the door for the next stage: the interview.

We spoke with Alexandra Cavoulacos, founder and chief operating officer of career coaching platform the Muse and co-author of the "The New Rules of Work," for some tips.

Don't be boring

The last thing you want to do is begin your application by saying, "Hi, I'm writing to express my interest in XYZ job opening," says Cavoulacos. Not only is that dull, but the hiring manager already knows you're interested in the job. Instead, you should be crafting your cover letter with the purpose of building a connection with the person on the other side of the screen. "You want somebody to finish reading it and say, 'We have to meet with this person,' she explains. And the best way to ensure that is by showing some personality — maybe even trying to make them laugh, says Cavoulacos. "Some of the best openers of cover letters I've seen are really atypical," she says. "Someone who's said, 'I loved selling since I've made more money on my lemonade stand than I got in allowance,' is way more likely to get called in for an interview."

Tell a story

You should write a cover letter in the same way you would a novel: with a clear beginning, middle and end. If someone were applying to a sales position, he or she might begin with, "When I first got into sales, I thought cold-calling would be my least favorite part," says Cavoulacos. He could then go on and say, "Even though cold-calling — as every sales person knows— isn't fun, that moment when you actually get them on the phone and convince them to talk to you has actually become my favorite high." And to wrap it all up: "Getting to see my determination in action and really bringing in revenue has been a big motivator, and I'm excited to do the same for this company." The narrative doesn't have to be very long; it can be a paragraph or even one sentence, as long as it successfully molds your accomplishments around a storyline.

Emphasize key skills

Showing a hiring manager your skills is important, but that doesn't mean you should be running through a list of all of your talents. After all, highlighting a set of skills that align most with the needs of the company is way more effective, says Cavoulacos. That often means going back to the job description and rereading the first couple bullet points. "If they mention three different times that experience with Photoshop is really important, then they're obviously trying to tell you something," she says.

The next step: Expand on each skillset in "show, don't tell" manner. "Don't just say, I can use Photoshop," says Cavoulacos. "Even, 'I've been using Photoshop for five years' doesn't tell me anything about how good you are at it— it just tells me that you have exposure to it." A more strategic cover letter might say: "My work with XYZ nonprofit to redevelop their logo and do a campaign, not only raised X thousand dollars for them, but also won this local award for nonprofit design," she says. In the end, it's all about showing the impact and the achievements that are tied to your skills, not just listing them.

Test takers should be extremely cautious with their time. ISTOCK

The ultimate tips for GRE success

Ace the exam with these test-day strategies.

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If the standard classroom exam wasn't stressful enough, try to stomach the GRE — a test that will help determine which graduate schools a student can get into. But the process doesn't have to anxiety-inducing.

We spoke with John Fulmer, national content director for the GMAT and GRE at the Princeton Review for some tactics to help students take on the test with confidence.

Get the easy points first

In the GRE, questions aren't arranged in order of difficulty. "Question five might be significantly harder than question six, and so one of the things that works really well is trying to tackle the easy questions first." If you understand the concept, and think you can answer the problem in a reasonable amount of time, then go for it, says the expert. But if something seems automatically tricky— say, a math equation that requires using a formula you never learned— it's important to simply skip it and move on.

At the end of the day, "it's really all about building up as many points as you possibly can," explains Fulmer.

Make use of the scrap paper

Test-takers have a bad habit of trying to solve problems in their head, says Fulmer. And while it might seem like a time-efficient strategy, it's often more harmful than helpful. Without any setup work to refer to, "there's no way to trace what you may have done wrong [in an equation], and you actually wind up taking more time than if you had just gotten into the habit of writing things down," says Fulmer.

And that doesn't mean students should jot down their work for just math problems. "Even for reading comprehension, doing something as simple as writing down a,b,c,d,e for the answer choices and crossing them off, as you decide that they're wrong can really be a big time-saver."

Reread the questions

"The GRE makes problems hard in a lot of different ways," says Fulmer. It may trot out a rule that not many people know, add some extra steps to an equation or include an obvious-looking answer choice that turns out to be wrong—and that's only a few of the tricky maneuvers. Sometimes questions are worded in a way that makes them easy to misinterpret, he explains. So how can test takers avoid falling into these hidden traps? By "making sure they get into the habit of rereading the question before picking an answer," says Fulmer.

If you're solving a geometry question, don't automatically assume that you'll need to find the area of the figure. That's what the test-makers want you to do, "and sure enough, there is going to be an answer choice that gives the area," he explains. Your job is to get rid of those preconceived notions and instead focus on what's on the page.

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Rest easy, Sixers' Fultz will be OK

The Sixers' first overall pick says he is fine after hurting his ankle, but will he miss any time?

EVAN MACY
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Markelle Fultz will be shut down for the remainder of the summer. GETTY IMAGES

The Sixers' can put all the talent they want to on their roster, they still have no control over the unfathomably bad injury luck the team has had over the last half dozen years.

As he dazzled in his third NBA Summer League game, first overall pick Markelle Fultz went down under the basket and immediately reached for his left ankle. He was helped off the floor as an all-too familiar feeling of Deja Vu swarmed over Philadelphia, just as it has over and over again during the team's relentless attempt to realize the dream of "The Process."

The Sixers' released a statement Sunday afternoon updating on the third quarter injury. They said that "Fultz underwent X-rays, which were negative, and the injury was determined to be a lateral ankle sprain. He will miss the remainder of Summer League and is expected to return to normal basketball activities in 1-2 weeks."

Fultz tweeted that he was fine following the game and was seen in good spirits on the practice court Sunday afternoon.

The story around the Sixers always seems to focus on the injury bug they can't seem to shake. Fultz has had a history of knee issues and an ankle injury in his third exhibition game as a pro will not do much to erase recent trends or the worries of fans who know this feeling all too well.

"Can't feel great, a guy going down, actually two players going down on the same play," Sixers' GM Bryan Colangelo told ESPN's Ramona Shelburne, referencing Timothé Luwawu-Cabarrot who injured his mouth at the same time. "Again, based on the initial diagnosis, you rather hear that than something worse."

A high ankle sprain usually takes between four and six weeks to heal, though reports are saying his injury is a mild case. This should not effect his availability to play, full strength, when the regular season begins this fall. However, recent history has Sixers' fans realizing yet another nightmare.

Last season, the 2016 first overall pick Ben Simmons played in the Summer League before injuring his foot. He required surgery and was expected to return in early 2017 — and then February of 2017. And then he was ruled out for the whole season. Joel Embiid — who had missed two entire seasons prior due to two foot surgeries — was out with a minor knee injury after dazzling for 31 regular season games. And then was out for a few weeks leading into February. And then was out for the season and underwent minor knee surgery.

In seasons before last, Embiid's absence paired with a season-long Nerlens Noel injury and a horribly failed experiment with Andrew Bynum appears to have the Sixers in a never-ending repeating injury-dogged hell.

In all likelihood, Fultz' injury will be minor, he will nurse the sprain and be ready to go in October. But you can't blame Sixers' fans for freaking out just a little bit.

"I'm a little bit punch-drunk with the injuries that we've had with our first players selected over the years,'' head coach Brett Brown said on ESPN Saturday night.

Injury woe was me

- **2012**: Andrew Bynum (knee, missed entire season)
- **2013**: Nerlens Noel (knee, missed entire season)
- **2014, 2015**: Joel Embiid (foot, missed entire season)
- **2016**: Ben Simmons (foot, missed entire season)
- **2017**: Markelle Fultz (high ankle sprain, 1-2 weeks?)

Is it time for Phillies to call up Kingery?

Kingery represented the Phillies in the MLB Futures Game. GETTY IMAGES

The Phillies are known to take a patient approach with its prospects, which often leads to the debate among fans as to whether it's better for a 20-something-year-old to mash in the minors knowing a call-up likely isn't coming regardless or to give that kid a taste of the majors to develop on the fly.

Nick Williams, who slugged his way to a .308 average with 13 homers in the six weeks leading up to his eventual call-up last weekend, hasn't looked out of place in his brief time up as he blasted his first career homer in a 7-1 win against the Padres Sunday.

Perhaps his success will increase the chances of another call-up: second baseman Scott Kingery.

The 23-year-old has absolutely mashed Triple-A pitching since his promotion from Reading. In nine games entering Wednesday, Kingery is batting .306 with eight RBI and four homers. This coming after a .313 average with 44 RBI and 18 home runs in 69 Double-A games this season.

Meanwhile, the Phillies second base situation hasn't been anything to get excited about as of late. Cesar Hernandez was having a fine campaign until an oblique injury struck, one that will sideline him for a few more weeks at the very least. That's given Ty Kelly some shots at second.

Kelly is batting .190 in 58 at bats. Howie Kendrick, too, has seen some work in Hernandez's absence, but he can easily move elsewhere.

It's time for Kingery to make the jump to the highest level. It may only be a handful of games at Triple-A, but he's done nothing but been the best player on the field each night.

It'd give this team a jolt in the arm along with the impact that Williams already has had on the team. For a team that sits at 26 wins and in the driver's seat for the No. 1 pick in next year's draft, why not promote a kid who has done more than enough to deserve it?

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5 Phillies' players on the trade block

Jeremy Hellickson and Pat Neshek are rumored to be on the way out of Philly, among others.

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The Phillies have the worst record in baseball as the All-Star break approaches and in Philadelphia, fans know what that means. It's time to start trade talks.

Philly will no doubt be sellers as the deadline approaches on July 31, and despite their less than mediocre play (they have 58 losses already, just shy of clinching a 100-loss season) they do have a few trade chips who can, at the very least, bring back some mid-level prospects.

1 Pat Neshek

Named to his second-ever All-Star team, Neshek is a stellar veteran arm and has a 1.31 ERA and a top 10 WHIP and walk ratio. He'll be a highly-desired piece for any contending team, though a non-closing reliever likely will not net a huge return. He is easily the most likely to be moved. The Royals, Yankees and Red Sox have reportedly been scouting the side-armer.

2 Jeremy Hellickson

The Phillies had a chance to trade Hellickson last season but did not pull the trigger despite his performance as the best starter from the 2016 campaign. This season he is 5-5 with a 4.49 ERA, up from 3.71 last season. He could be a solid fifth arm in a contending rotation and trading him would open a spot for a young farmhand like Tom Eshelman.

3 Hector Neris

Neris, 28, is a little young to be shopped hard as a reliever and could have a bright future but the Phillies could leverage him — a young solid arm — and get a relatively good return from a team in need of bullpen help. The sometimes closer has a 3.38 ERA and seven saves.

4 Tommy Joseph

Joseph is 25-years-old and has 15 home runs and has the second-most extra base hits this month with seven. But he has shown not to be a middle-order average hitter and his power seems to be above average at best. Perhaps it's time to take a risk and open up the log-jam that is blocking minor league All-Star and home run leader Rhys Hoskins from making it to The Show. Phillies GM Matt Klentak said Hoskins and Joseph "cannot exist on the same team," and officials have seemed resistant to try either in the outfield.

Maikel Franco is potentially available on the trade market — for a high price. GETTY IMAGES

5 Maikel Franco

Franco is another reportedly available player with a high asking price. Franco has been wildly inconsistent, ranging from playing like the future cleanup hitter for a Phillies contender to a sub Mendoza-line hitter at the bottom of the order. Maybe a change of scenery can help the 24-year-old with a very high ceiling to reach his potential.

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The Flyers' hope Nolan Patrick will be read for the regular season. ZACH HILL, PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

Flyers' Patrick remains patient as camp opens

The Flyers' second overall pick took mental reps from the sideline as he recovers from surgery.

KYLE PHILLIPPI
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The Flyers hit the ice for the first time since the regular season ended as 40 prospects gathered for the team's development camp.

Absent from that, though, was the Flyers No. 2 selection from this summer's draft: Nolan Patrick.

The Brandon Wheat Kings product underwent abdominal surgery prior to the draft on June 13th. Nonetheless, Patrick remained observant and absorbed all he could as he watched from the outside.

"I've been watching some film that they were showing us, I was watching the drills today, it's something I can take back and do with my skills coach at home and obviously stuff I can do when I skate here," Patrick said. "There's a lot to learn and I'm just going to try and learn as much as I can."

Patrick, speaking in a press conference setting, said he will be ready to skate next week, but will not participate in any on-ice drills during the camp, which wraps up with the Trial on the Isle on Wednesday.

"I'm feeling great," Patrick said. "I'm really happy I got it done."

He knows that when training camp rolls around, he'll have to put in a little more work than the rest. That's not a problem for him.

The 6-foot-2 center is focused on getting back in shape and building up his strength for what he hopes is his first season in the NHL. He'll more than likely earn a spot on the Flyers roster, quite possibly as the second or third line pivot.

If that happens, it'd be a rare goal met for him.

"It'd be a huge honor," Patrick said. "I think every kid growing up wants to play in the NHL, and that's been my goal since I was super young. I don't set too many goals for myself, but three years ago I wanted to play in the NHL my first year eligible so that's what I'll try to do."

Going back to his injury, Patrick was very honest in his assessment of how last year went. He was asked to give a percentage of how he felt after reportedly playing through the pain all of last season.

His response?

"I was probably 60 percent when I first started playing than I maybe got up to 70-75 percent tops," Patrick admitted. "I never had any wind during games, I'd lose my energy really quick, it was a lot more energy trying to skate with that injury."

Mind you, Patrick went on to post 46 points on 20 goals and 26 assists in 33 games last season.

If he did all of that at 60 percent, this organization has to be grinning ear-to-ear with what possibly could be when he hits 100 percent.

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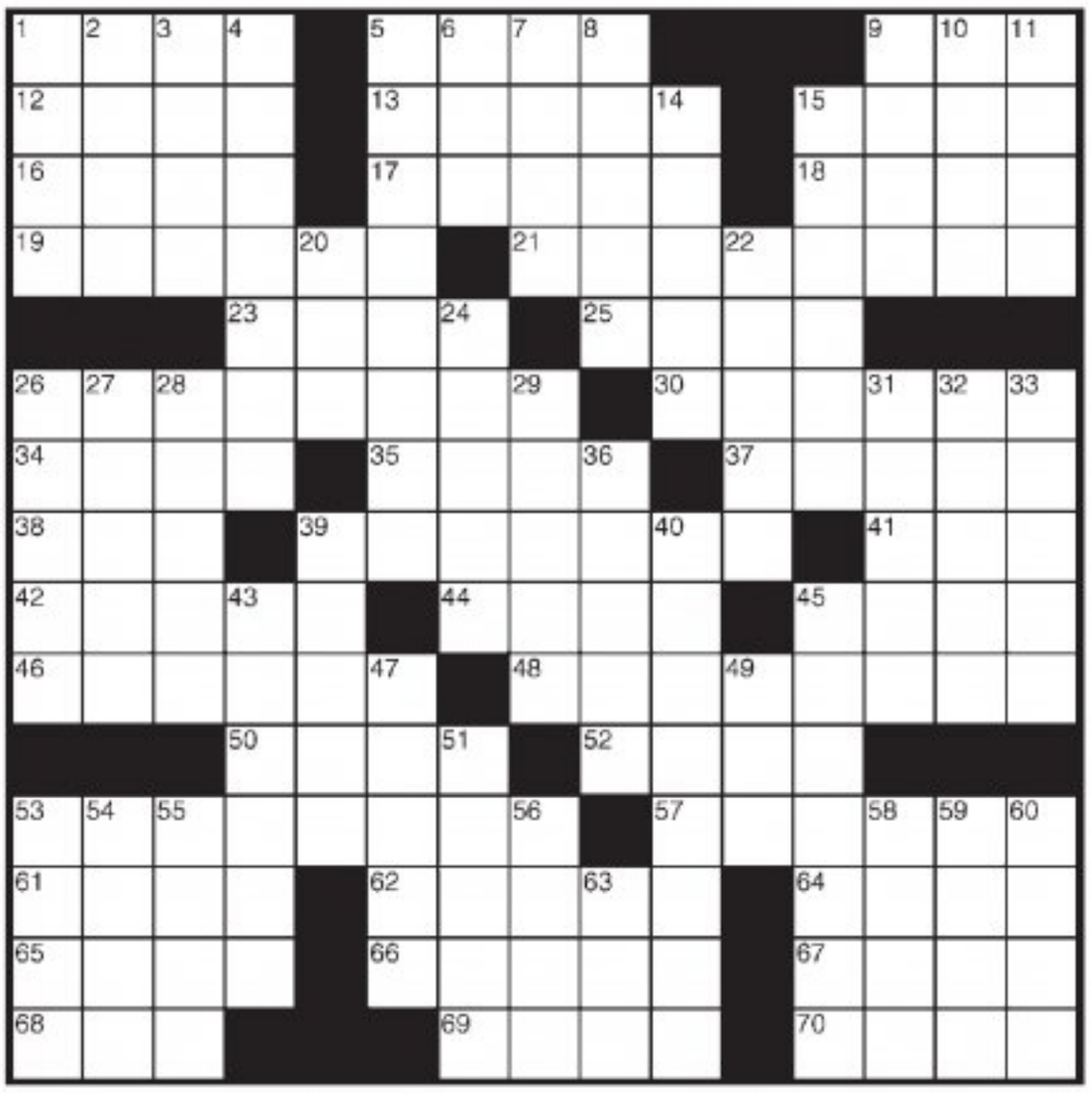
metro.us/games

metro.us/crossword

Across
1 Bleak
5 Green gem
9 Punch
12 Guru's practice
13 Track standout Jesse --
15 Morse invention
16 Frame of mind
17 Make joyful
18 Go to earth
19 Actress Meryl --
21 Least able to retain water
23 "A Holly Jolly Christmas" singer
25 Road map nos.
26 Omaha's state
30 Willowy
34 Lamb's pen name
35 Cows' chews
37 Epic by Homer
38 Apiece
39 Bad guy
41 Sorority letter
42 Actor Braugher
44 Potter's oven
45 Detect
46 Powerful beams
48 Horse chestnuts
50 Social climber
52 Watch's face
53 Tinkered
57 Like a wedding cake
61 Kind of molding
62 Fountain in Rome
64 Concern
65 Attired
66 Rathskeller mug
67 Make fall
68 Olive in the comics
69 Fawn's parent
70 Cult

Down
1 Workout sites
2 Show team spirit
3 Composer -- Stravinsky
4 Fortified wine
5 "My Cousin Vinny" star (2 wds.)
6 Boring tool
7 Real bargain
8 Go in
9 -- de vivre
10 Augments
11 Red vegetable
14 Installs in office
15 Woodworking tool
20 Mrs. Peron
22 Bacon or Kline
24 Lurk
26 Himalayan country
27 Helen, in Spanish
28 Tweeters
29 Bob Hope specialty (2 wds.)
31 Fresh
32 Nevadan lake
33 Makes changes
36 Madrid toast
39 Founder of sci-fi
40 Egging on
43 Took it easy
45 Chooses
47 Places in order
49 Chiang -- -shek
51 Lahr and Parks
53 Somewhat, in music
54 Ill-favored
55 Greenish-blue color
56 Bug repellent
58 One in a million
59 Guitarist -- Clapton
60 Govt. branch
63 Airline ticket word



metro.us/sudoku

easy

						1	8	
8		5	1				2	7
	1			5			3	
5			2	7		6		
4				6				2
		9		8	4			3
	5			9			7	
1	6				2	5		8
	8	7						

hard

		8		2	6		3	
	4		9					
	5		4		3	7		9
								5
9	6	4				8	7	1
5								
6		9	3		4		5	
					2		1	
	2		6	1		9		

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Be careful how you handle family matters and people who want something from you. It's important to carefully gauge what you can do before you make promises.

Taurus Consider where certain information is coming from before you get worked up over nothing. An impulsive act will not make matters better.

Gemini Physical and emotional changes will make your life easier and less stressful. Discuss your plans with a loved one and prepare to move ahead. Romance is in the stars.

Cancer You can make positive changes at home and within important partnerships if you stick to a set budget. Be amicable and willing to compromise for the best results.

Leo Seize any chance you get to let your Leo charm take control and win you popularity as well as favors. Offering input and hands-on assistance will seal a deal.

Virgo Look at the big picture. A little finesse and charm will get you much further then criticism. Don't let a personal incident disrupt your day.

Libra Express the way you feel. Not everyone will agree, but at least you will make your point clear and find out who will stand with you.

Scorpio Emotions will take charge, leaving you in a quandary. Don't let jealousy or possessiveness ruin your day or a relationship with someone special.

Sagittarius Rethink the way you handle your money or any health, legal or contractual matters. It's important to see all sides of a situation before making a change.

Capricorn Think big, but be realistic in your pursuits. Stay away from anyone asking you to take a risk or be impulsive. Don't stray from your comfort zone.

Aquarius Share your thoughts and listen to the feedback. Much can be accomplished if you collaborate. Physical improvements can be made and will draw compliments.

Pisces Setbacks will develop if you are misleading. Be open about any change you want to make so you can feel free to implement it without being sneaky. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

L	I	T	E	R	■	E	L	I	D	E	■	Y	E	W
L	O	O	S	E	■	P	O	N	D	S	■	U	T	A
D	U	M	A	S	■	S	L	I	T	S	■	C	H	I
■	■	■	U	B	O	A	T	■	A	S	C	O	T	
M	I	N	I	M	U	M	■	■	B	Y	P	A	S	S
A	N	O	D	E	S	■	M	O	O	S	E	■	■	■
P	U	R	E	■	H	E	A	V	Y	■	A	P	T	S
L	I	M	O	■	■	I	K	E	■	■	K	E	E	L
E	T	A	L	■	A	R	E	N	A	■	S	A	R	A
■	■	■	O	I	L	E	R	■	S	C	U	R	R	Y
A	L	I	G	N	S	■	■	S	T	A	P	L	E	S
T	O	N	Y	S	■	B	R	O	A	D	■	■	■	■
L	T	D	■	E	L	L	E	N	■	G	A	M	U	T
A	T	E	■	R	I	A	T	A	■	E	V	O	K	E
S	O	X	■	T	I	B	E	R	■	S	E	W	E	D

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RSVP

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- ☐ Alzheimer's Disease
- ☐ Bipolar Disorder
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Eczema/Psoriasis
- ☐ Healthy Adults
- ☐ Kidney Disease
- ☐ Liver Disease
- ☐ Low Back Pain
- ☐ Migraines
- ☐ Pain Crohn's
- ☐ PTSD
- ☐ Osteoarthritis
- ☐ Schizophrenia
- ☐ Schizoaective
- ☐ Suboxone/Addiction
- ☐ Type 2 Diabetes
- ☐ Asthma

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